

VZCZCXRO7368
PP RUEHHM RUEHPB
DE RUEHWN #0785/01 1281810
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 081810Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2440
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1427
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0079
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRIDGETOWN 000785

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/02/2016

TAGS: [AORC](#) [EAID](#) [EFIS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [JA](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: CARIBBEAN WHALING VOTES SOLD TO JAPAN

REF: A. BRIDGETOWN 753

[1](#)B. 05 BRIDGETOWN 2296

Classified By: CDA Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) Corrected copy of ref A, which did not include the EST Collective as an addressee.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: Caribbean nations sold Japan their support for ending the international ban on whaling, complain environmentalists who fear that the Caribbean could help Japan overturn this prohibition during the International Whaling Commission's (IWC) June meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis. The six small countries of the Eastern Caribbean have received hundreds of millions of dollars in aid from Japan in a quid pro quo that led them to be among the most vocal proponents of ending the commercial whaling ban, according to critics. The Caribbeans have argued in response that whales are a renewable resource, the hunting of which can be sustained. Despite their protestations to the contrary, the Eastern Caribbean has played a role in the whaling controversy out of all proportion to the limited international agendas and financial resources of these small island-states. The situation suggests that Caribbean governments are not averse to selling their positions on whaling, or other issues for that matter, to benefactors that offer aid to these economically troubled countries. End summary.

Whaling Votes Sold to Japan

[1](#)3. (U) Japan purchased the support of the six small island-states of the Eastern Caribbean for the Asian nation's effort to end the international ban on whaling, according to several leading environmental groups. The most recent accusation came from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) during an April conference of Caribbean environmentalists. The IFAW also accused St. Vincent and the Grenadines of denying its research vessel "Song of the Whale" permission to enter Vincentian waters during a recent Caribbean voyage.

[1](#)4. (U) The six Eastern Caribbean states, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, have voted consistently since 1992 to repeal the IWC's moratorium on commercial whaling, according to several published reports including one by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Critics contend that

the Caribbeans' votes are the result of a concerted Japanese effort begun in 1986, the same year the IWC imposed the ban on whaling, to influence governments by delivering substantial amounts of aid. Japan pays for the Eastern Caribbean countries' membership in the IWC and attendance at its annual meetings. Japan has also provided funds to assist St. Kitts and Nevis in hosting the IWC's 2006 annual meeting.

Dominica's White Whale

¶5. (U) Japan was the top bilateral donor to the six Eastern Caribbean nations during the period 1998 to 2002, according to the Japanese Embassy in Trinidad's website. The most significant Japanese assistance to the region has been to support the fishing industries in these sea going societies. Japan has provided approximately US\$220 million in grants to construct numerous fishing-related facilities in all six countries. Dominica, at US\$51 million, has received the most fishing-related aid, including construction of a US\$15.12 million fishing complex in the town of Marigot on the island's rugged Atlantic Coast. Completed in 2002, this gleaming, modern facility that includes a large concrete seawall, pier, refrigerated fish storage building and public market, presents a stark contrast to the ramshackle town and small fishing boats it serves.

Whale Watching and Hunting, Not Incompatible

¶6. (U) Dominica proved itself to be a staunch ally of Japan

BRIDGETOWN 00000785 002 OF 003

during the 2005 IWC meeting in South Korea, where the Dominica representative, Lloyd Pascal, explained to the press that his country is a whale watching destination that also looks forward to the "day when whale harvesting" can begin. Pascal said that whale meat could be used in Dominica as a source of food and sold as a commodity. He denied that there was any contradiction in his country, a noted eco-tourism destination, conducting whale watching and hunting simultaneously. Pascal also denied that the Japanese had influenced his Government's position on whaling.

¶7. (C) Note: In contrast, Dominica Foreign Minister Charles Savarin characterized his country's relationship with Japan as a clear "quid pro quo" during a 2005 meeting with Emboffs (ref B). Refreshingly, in 2001 Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Lester Bird said to the press, "I'm not going to be a hypocrite," and admitted to taking Japanese aid in exchange for supporting an end to the ban on whaling. End note.

St. Vincent's Whaling Tradition

¶8. (U) The Eastern Caribbean nation with the most direct interest in whaling is St. Vincent and the Grenadines, where the residents of Bequia, one of the small Grenadine islands, engage in "aboriginal subsistence whaling." The IWC allows Bequians to take up to four humpback whales a year in recognition of the island's traditional whaling culture. At present, two crews of Bequia whalers use small wooden boats and hand-held harpoons to hunt whales, typically taking two or three a year. The whale meat is divided among the families of the whalers with excess meat sold on the island. The whalers have recently attempted to make their trade, including the butchering of the whales, appear less grisly to the many foreigners who vacation on Bequia, St. Vincent's chief fisheries officer explained to Poloff.

¶9. (SBU) Comment: It is curious that Bequia has been permitted "aboriginal subsistence whaling" by the IWC. The island is not inhabited by aboriginal people but by persons

of African and European descent whose ancestors only began hunting whales with the arrival of commercial whaling in 1875. The international industry virtually ended by 1925, after which the island attempted to keep a local whaling industry alive with limited success. Bequia being given aboriginal whaling rights seems somewhat akin to the modern residents of Nantucket, Massachusetts, being allowed to hunt whales because their forebearers were commercial whalers.
End comment.

St. Kitts to Host Whaling Commission

110. (U) The Caribbean's position on whaling will receive heightened attention when the International Whaling Commission holds its annual meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis. The IWC's scientific committees will meet May 23 to June 15, after which the actual Commission will meet June 16 to 20. The Government of St. Kitts has indicated that during the meeting it will push to end the ban on commercial whaling. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Cedric Liburd told the press that the IWC should allow the resumption of limited whaling. He explained that this was an important issue to the countries of the Eastern Caribbean, which could use whales "to feed our people." The Minister placed the whaling issue in the context of the recent closure of St. Kitts's once dominant sugar industry, the negative economic impact of which necessitates that the country "tap into" other natural resources such as whale stocks.

Comment

111. (C) The Eastern Caribbean clearly sold its votes on whaling to the Japanese, despite the efforts of these governments to frame ending the ban on whaling as a potential economic boon to their countries. The small, cash-strapped governments in the region have limited international political agendas and frequently opt out of international fora that would appear to concern their national interests.

BRIDGETOWN 00000785 003 OF 003

It seems unlikely, therefore, that these governments would consistently take a stand on whaling and send representatives to IWC meetings around the globe unless prompted to do so by Japan. The conviction with which Eastern Caribbean governments advocate ending the whaling ban suggests that Japan has been extremely successful in its approach to finding and coaching allies in an unpopular cause. This example of checkbook diplomacy may be particularly stark, but it is far from the only example of financial suasion trumping scruples. The willingness of Eastern Caribbean governments to "adjust" their positions, whether over whaling, recognition of China versus Taiwan, or support of Venezuela and Cuba, suggests that when a regional leader asserts a "principled stand" on an issue, it may mean that there was no money in it.
GILROY